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Plenary Reports:

Development Communication,
The Islamic Identity,
Dadah Menace,
Environmentalism,
Consumerism,
Rural-Urban Migration,
Multi-National Corporation
SEMINAR "COMMUNICATING ISSUES OF THE '80s: CHALLENGE AND RESPONSE"

PLENARY REPORTS ON:

1. DEVELOPMENT COMMUNICATION
2. THE ISLAMIC IDENTITY
3. DADAH MENACE
4. ENVIRONMENTALISM
5. CONSUMERISM
6. RURAL-URBAN-MIGRATION
7. MULTI-NATIONAL CORPORATIONS
PLENARY REPORT ON

DEVELOPMENT COMMUNICATION

Paper presented by YB Tan Sri Dr. Arshad Ayub,
Secretary-General,
Ministry of Agriculture,
Malaysia.

Chairperson : Mr. Lau Keng Wah,
Chief Executive,
Sin Shew Jit Poh

Panelists : En. Mustapha Juman,
Deputy Director General
FELCRA

Encik Nik Kamaruddin b. Nik Abd. Kadir
Director of Economic,
Planning and Budgeting,
RISDA

En. Jaafar Kamin,
Controller of Programmes (TV), RTM

En. Mat Abas b. Yusof
Director of Services,
Social Development,
FELDA.

Mr. David Zielenziger,
Correspondent, Asian Wall Street,
Journal.
Tan Sri Dr. Arshad Ayub, Secretary-General of the Agriculture Minister in his keynote paper stressed, "Federal and State Government officials must be close partners in the planning and decision-making processes of agricultural projects". While emphasizing the importance of extension in dissemination of agricultural innovations, Dr. Arshad felt that mass media could play a significant role in changing the attitude of the people in right direction. "Mass media must be mobilised and involved in national development programmes.

This was followed up by brief presentations from Dr. Nora Quebral, Chairman, Department of Development Communication, Univ. of Philippines Los Banos; and Dr. Buamrongsook Siha-phai, Faculty of Communication Arts, Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok, Thailand. Both Drs. Quebral and Siha-phai pinpointed the need for viewing development communication in the perspective of total human development and not merely an economic development alone. Dr. Quebral felt that since last ten years when she tried to define development communication, many new facets have been added. However, it was about time to concentrate more on action than on discussing the theoretical and academic aspects of development communication.

Subsequently, the five members of the Panel discussed development communication from different angles with specific illustrations from their practical work experience.

Encik Mustapha Juman discussed the scope and functions of FELCRA. He outlined the objectives of FELCRA as -

- To create more employment;
- To increase agricultural productivity; and
- To increase land ownership

Some of the difficulties encountered in bringing modern technologies to the people concerned include people's unresponsiveness and raising expectations which might be difficult to achieve.

In order to achieve the objectives, therefore, FELCRA employs systematic communication strategy. Among the strategies employed are - Involvement of Kampong leaders at the initial stages of planning; dissemination of information in stages; and suitable schemes to alleviate the people from hardships.

Some of the questions raised by Encik Mustapha include - how to make farmers produce as much as researchers have produced? and who are the communication, academicians, government officials or media practitioners?
Encik Mohamed Sulaiman explained the difficulties in getting a clear-cut definition of even development. According to him, development communication is a multi-dimensional function. Encik Mohamed pointed out that development should involve more than economic change, it is all encompassing and must be tied up with the quality of life.

He mentioned that RISDA was engaged in improving the conditions of 400,000 small holder's families in Malaysia a some of the improvement to its success comprise fragmented holding, lack of infrastructure, lack of hired labour, absent landlordism and other socio-economic problems. He raised the question of as to who should bear the risk of small holders in case of price fluctuations.

Communication should be geared towards improving the conditions of these small holders so that they get fair share of the cake of development. He realized that people resist change which could be overcome by organizing training programmes.

Encik Jaafar Kamin discussed the supportive service of C.B. Radio and TV in societal change in Malaysia, explained the framework of RTM's day-to-day programming as well as its long term planning. However, lack of audience research on the operation guideline "constitutes partly of what we think the public went, and partly of what we think the public ought to know about." This guideline is bound by a sacred ethic of broadcasts i.e. respect the audience." Broadcast media should strive to bring about changes in attitudes required by the policies of the people's government. No single factor or communication approach can ensure complete success. It should be "a multi-approach and multidisciplinary interaction, that will at least, cover and satisfy the communication needs of the so-called "modern society of today".

Encik Mat Abas b. Yusof discussed briefly the activities of FELDA. About 60,000 families have been settled. Despite the fact that various technologies have been introduced, Encik Mat Abas felt that the people were not adequately prepared to take up these technologies. FELDA was using necessary communication techniques to prepare the people for easy and quick acceptance and adoption of these technologies. Adequate emphasis was given to communicating with rural people in their language. The local leaders were actively involved in planning and implementing development programmes.
The last speaker on the panel Mr. David Zielenziger explained the type of clientele the Asian Wall Street Journal was trying to serve. He stressed the elements of in-depth reporting, analytical and investigative reporting and somewhat critical of the Malaysian press.

Discussions

Encik Mansoor Haji Ahmad commented that the essence of communication was its effectiveness. Furthermore, people should be made to understand the importance of communicator. Prof. Mansoor also touched on the human development in the entire gamut of development communication.

Mr. Djoko Soejono printed out that rural/community press should be started with government subsidies. Rural newspapers has been introduced in Indonesia with Government support. In has been working successfully and rural people are using if in increasing numbers.

Mr. Soejono mentioned the positive and negative aspects of TV specially on rural youth of Indonesia and questioned as to how to minimise the negative effects. Encik Jaafar in his reply referred to a paper entitled, "what is the effect of TV broadcast on the people?". In the absence of sufficient research findings, it would be difficult to come up with concrete solutions.

Mr. M.P. Deva wanted to know the role of media practitioners in people to government communication. Encik Jaafar reflied that the RTM was well aware of the importance of feedback and every effort was made to seek objective reactions of the audience. However, there is enough scope for improvement and efforts are underway towards this end.

In reply to a question from Mariam Abdul Rahman, an ITM Student, about the programme planned for the second Generation Felda scheme, Encik Mat Abbas said the FELDA was basically concerned with educational performance of various age groups. Due to time constraint, he could not discuss in detail the programs of the second sensation.

The panel discussion ended with a vote of thanks by the Chairman, Dr. P.R.R. Singh to the members of the panel and to the participants.
PLENARY REPORT ON

THE ISLAMIC IDENTITY

CHAIRPERSON : PROF. AHMAD IBRAHIM
DEAN, FACULTY OF LAW,
UNIVERSITY OF MALAYA.

PAPER PRESENTED BY : DR. MOHD KAMAL HASSAN
COORDINATOR, PROGRAM DIPLOMA ISLAM,
FACULTY OF ISLAMIC STUDIES,
UNIVERSITY KEBANGSAAN MALAYSIA.

RESOURCE PERSONS : 1. PUAH LILY MAJID,
SECRETARY, WOMEN'S ISLAMIC WELFARE BOARD

2. EN. ANWAR IBRAHIM,
PRESIDENT
MALAYSIAN ISLAMIC YOUTH MOVEMENT.

3. TUAN HJ. MOHD ZAIN ABDUL RASHID
EXECUTIVE SECRETARY,
PERKIM

4. EN. TAHIR RAMLI
RADIO TALIVISYEN MALAYSIA.
Islamic Identity Crisis in the Muslim Community in Contemporary Malaysia

The workshop session on the Islamic Identity was held from 2.30 p.m. - 5.30 p.m. on the 18th September 1980 at the Lotus Room, Merlin Hotel, under the chairmanship of Professor Ahmad Ibrahim.

Dr. Mohamed Kamal Hassan presented the working paper. He defined the Islamic identity crisis as "a decisive stage or turning point in the progress of efforts by Muslims to actualise Islamic values and norms in the Muslim personality, institutions, society and culture which is accompanied by resistance, unease, misapprehensions or confusion within the some Muslim community which is undergoing rapid social change". He then traced various indicators of the Islamic identity crisis in Malaysia and particularised Da'wah, Education, Culture (literature, drama, art and entertainment), economy, politics,(including the political and legal system). He finally traced the roots of the crisis to the special nature of Islam as a way of life. For Islam the consummation of religions ideal is to be realised in individual and communal perfection. In Islam the divine pattern (in the form of creed, law and morality) is totalist in the sense that it covers and is addressed to all aspects of human life and activity. In addition to this the actualisation of the divine pattern, in order to be complete and proper, demands the creation of a community (ummah) devoted to the cause of serving the pleasure of God. There followed comments on the paper by the resource persons.

Puan Lily Majeed said that the difference between the youth who want Islam to be practised in full and the establishment is not something new. Religious education as given in the school is inadequate, in her opinion. The system of education is by rote and memory and the students are taught to accept without questioning. We need to find a via media between the liberal and the extreme.

Anwar Ibrahim congratulated Dr. Kamal Hassan on his paper. The matter was one of perception - whether we should regard Islam merely as a ritual or accept it as a Comprehensive Din and way of life. This question has created a difference between the contending groups. The understanding of this issue relates to the quest for socio-economic justice.

He questioned the validity of the image portrayed by national media and the political leaders of Islam as a ritual.

No attempt has been made by any political party to show that Islam is a tolerant religion - only the so called "Dakwah" groups have tried to show this.

There is no reason for antagonism between the different races, if the principles of Islam are put forward. Islam regards humanity as the creature of God and even the differences between peoples are created by God.
Every human being should call against immorality and corruption. Why should Islam's teachings in this respect not be welcomed.

The problem in projecting the Islamic identity lies in the media itself. The problem of methodological and intellectual colonialism prevents the true projection of Islam.

If Islam were properly projected it could help to bring the races together in support of development which would not against moral principles and socio-economic justice.

Tuan Haji Mohamed Zain Abdul Rashid said that there were many factors which hinder the understanding and practice of Islam. Rigid observance of tradition and the clinging to customs impede the full observance of Islam. The growth of nationalism has led the ethnic groups to think of their own self-interest. There is a prejudice against the new converts. Political parties in their effort to get votes play up issues which confuse the younger generation. In achieving our objective, we have to go step by step, but the question is for how long. A start has to be made but it is better to be safe - "Biar Lambat Asal Selamat".

Mr. Tahir Mohamed Ramly said the mass media tries to project our culture, drama, art and entertainment. He referred to the guidelines of RTM which are (1) to explain the Government's policies in depth (2) to stimulate public interest and opinion (3) to foster solidarity through Bahasa Malaysia (4) to foster civic mindedness among Malaysians (5) to provide popular education, general information and entertainment. The programmes of Radio-TV Malaysia must follow these guidelines.

Radio-TV Malaysia have tried to play a part in the communication of the teachings of Islam and in highlighting Islamic events in Malaysia. Radio-TV Malaysia are only the communicators and must depend on the sources of information for the effective communication.

The Islamic identity crisis should be regarded as a challenge and everyone should try to make the communication of the Islamic teachings and the Islamic way of life more effective.

There was a lively discussion arising from questions from the floor.

In closing the workshop the Chairman said that two problems have been identified. We need a more effective communication of Islam as a life by religious teachers and lecturers. The mass media for their part should endeavour to learn about Islam as a way of life and try to project a correct picture of Islam. The Chairman suggested that perhaps communication itself needs an Islamic identity and proposed that Mara students should arrange a seminar on Islamic teachings about communication.
PLENARY REPORT ON
DADAH MENACE

CHAIRPERSON: Puan Azah Aziz,
Advisor,
Women's Journalist Association of Malaysia.

PAPER PRESENTED BY: YB Dato Wan Mahmood b. Pawan Teh,
Deputy Secretary General,
Ministry of Information.

PANELISTS:
En. Sulaiman Osman,
Director
National Security Council,
Prime Minister's Department.

En. Mustapha Ma,
Secretary General,
PENADAM.

Dr. Syed M. Haq,
Faculty of Medicine,
University Kebangsaan Malaysia.

Mr. David Tambyah,
Executive Editor,
New Straits Times Press.

Dr. M.P. Deva,
Assoc. Prof.
Psychological Medicine,
University of Malaya.
YB Dato Wan Mahmood called for an intergrated approach involving everyone concerned with the mass media to solve our number one enemy, dadah.

He began the paper by urging that the word "dadah" be used to denote illicit drugs, rather than merely "drugs" which are used for legitimate medical purposes.

Malaysia, he said, is foremost amongst countries facing the dadah problem. This is due to many factors, among which are:

a) Malaysia's rapid development which has resulted in the migration of youth into a new society for which they are not prepared.

b) Malaysia's position close to the Golden Triangle and the Thai border which allows for the free flow of dadah into the country.

c) Malaysia's population, 50% of whom are under the age of 30. Statistics show that the majority of addicts are within this age group.

d) Malaysia's open door policy on the importation of various cultures through the mass media, resulting in confusion of values. This makes the climate ripe for dadah.

e) Subversive activities in the country tend to include the use of dadah for their own ends.

He quoted some alarming statistics to underline the seriousness of the problem. There are, in this country of a population of 12 million people, 40,000 known addicts. Using an internationally accepted formula, that for every known case, there are at least 9 others, this makes the total number in the region of 400,000. He called on everyone to take the problem seriously because it is no longer a social problem, but a security problem and the number one enemy of the country.

The government has taken steps to treat the addict through methods of detoxification by which addicts are given substitute drugs to minimise withdrawal syndromes. This is followed by rehabilitation aimed at making fundamental changes in the personality and lifestyle of the patient which will eventually free him from the craving for dadah. Success depends not only on the patient himself, but also the community and the environment.

Far more important than treatment is prevention. Dato Wan Mahmood stressed on the importance of preventive education, the aim of which is to prevent those that have not taken to dadah from becoming addicts.

The first step, he said, is to understand what causes a dependency on dadah. He cited several reasons, among which are:

a) Curiosity
b) Peer group pressure
c) Ignorance
d) Low threshold of tolerance for frustration and disappointment
e) Unstable home environment
f) Personality disorder
etc.
Dato' Wan Mahmood then went on to suggest several solutions based on the reasons that have been outlined.

a) To counteract the problem of curiosity, youth should be provided with sufficient knowledge of the dangers of dadah and be exposed to the unhappy experiences of dadah addicts. Here the mass media play a vital role. He warned, however, of the dangers of overpublicity which might produce negative results.

b) To tackle the problem of peer pressure in the wrong directions, he suggested that the public and the mass media mould the minds of peer leaders towards constructive activities like sports and games.

c) In combating ignorance, he placed the responsibility of education mainly on parents and the mass media. They should inform youth on the dangers of dadah and promote preventive education among the public.

d) On the factor of low resistance to frustrations and failure, he suggested religious education as one way of stabilising the individual, encouraging him to accept problems as challenges he must face rather than seek an escape route through dadah.

e) Emphasising a healthy home environment, he said that strong family ties and firm relations must be established within a family to provide support in times of difficulty.

f) Where the problem is inherent weakness in the personality, he suggested that counselling services be encouraged and publicised. Youth clubs should be encouraged to allow for greater social contact among youth.

g) On the problem of pushers, he urged the media to inculcate in the minds of the public a hatred for activities of pushers and to volunteer information to authorities for action.

In the battle to rid society of the dadah menace, the role of the media is paramount. He urged that the media adopt an integrated approach reflecting a consistency in the way that norms and values are projected through the media. He suggested that the Malaysian media adopt innovative ways to carry the message, e.g. through the "boria" or the "dikir barat" or the street medicine man, to support the efforts made by newspapers, TV, radio and government publications.

Dato' wan Mahmood stressed that the battle cannot be won solely by legislation, law enforcement, physical preventive measures or rehabilitation. Society, he said, must be motivated into being directly involved to achieve complete success. The mass media, with its vast reach, must not create confusion by irresponsible publicity on drugs and addicts. Rather, they should formulate an integrated approach on a long term basis which would rid society of this menace once and for all.
Encik Sulaiman Osman: Speaking off the cuff, Encik Sulaiman echoed the views presented by Dato Wan Mahmood in his paper. He stressed that dadah is the number one security problem in the country. Many of the other problems faced by the country are also to a very large extent caused by or a result of dadah addiction. One should therefore not view the dadah problem in isolation because of its far-reaching consequences.

He made several suggestions regarding the control of the problem. One is that moves must be made to prevent the illicit production of drugs, at the international level. The United Nations can play a decisive role by ensuring that only the UN be responsible for the production of drugs required for medical purposes.

A second suggestion is that preventive education must be stepped up. The young, he said, should be educated from the cradle into developing an aversion for drugs.

A third suggestion is that all media (the print and electronic media) must be used in a concerted manner in society's battle against dadah.

A fourth suggestion is that, because dadah addiction is rampant among youth under the age of 30, that a counselling service be set up to provide advice and guidance to youth on the problem.

Encik Sulaiman concluded that because of the enormity of the problem, we must plan a careful strategy, even if the planning takes a whole year to complete, so that a concerted and effective campaign can be launched to fight the dadah menace.

Encik Mustapha Ma: He described the dadah menace as a human problem, the extensive nature of which has affected development and security. What concerns the government is that despite all efforts, the problem continues to grow.

It was for this reason that PEMADAM was formed. Encik Ma described the objectives of Pemadam as being fourfold. The first is to work together with the State and Federal Governments to eliminate dadah production and abuse. The second is to conduct research into dadah abuse and rehabilitate addicts. The third is to make the public aware of the problem and become involved in efforts to eradicate it. The fourth is to promote and streamline the association's activities in the states and districts.

Reiterating what was said by Dato Wan Mahmood, he is also of the opinion that prevention is better than cure. He said that apart from efficient enforcement, educational approaches are preferred. These may take the form of mass rallies to create public awareness, small group question-and-answer sessions, short courses for special interest groups and counsellors, brainstorming and evaluation sessions.

In conducting its information giving function, Pemadam makes use of the following media: A feature film titled "The Dadah Dependent" produced by the Johore State Government; a two-minute public service message is shown regularly over TV Malaysia. In addition, posters, stickers, slogans and theme banners have been distributed widely.
Encik Ma went on to outline some of the problems faced by PEMADAM. One is the problem of getting feedback. If it is accepted that communication is a two-way process, it is not enough for PEMADAM to initiate the communication without the feedback. The target group which has been identified has yet to be reached. In this respect, he explained that PEMADAM has been working with the School of Mass Communications, ITM, to bring to realisation a program called "Outreach" with the intent of reaching out to and helping the high risk groups of youth at the grass roots level. Other organisations, he was glad to announce, also made contributions in cash or kind. The need then is to coordinate all these efforts to contain the problem.

Another problem that was mentioned was the problem of volunteers. PEMADAM, he said, has been losing volunteers who feel frustrated that it seems a hopeless battle. There is therefore a need to recruit more volunteers and more donors.

He deplored the fact that support to preventive measures from the government has not been forthcoming, perhaps because results are intangible.

He concluded that the problem is of great significance to communicators and the mass media. The mass media can play a positive role to bring home the point that the eradication of the drug menace is an all-out effort involving everyone and that everything must be done to rid society of this social scourge.

Dr. Syed M. Haq: While recognising the problems of drug abuse which were dealt with at length by previous speakers, Dr. Haq rather chose to talk about the impending problem of misuse of licit drugs available in the market. These drugs (psychotropic substances), he said, could become a public and social problem if used as substitutes for drugs or with other drugs for non-medical purposes, precipitating another kind of dependence.

He admitted that although there is adequate safeguard to check any abuse of a particular drug, there is a need for a set of guidelines for the control of such drugs to identify the kind of psychotropic substance liable to abuse, and to assess the health and social consequences of such abuse.

Elaborating on the health and social consequences of the problem, he said that prolonged drug abuse can result in a permanent disorganisation of personality and jeopardise the physical health of the dependent.

Of equal concern is the social aspect. The drug environment has contributed to increase in violent crimes and other organized criminal activities.

Concluding his talk, he suggested that an effective monitoring system be set up to ensure that such drugs do not spill over into illicit trade. Secondly, he called for the establishment of research facilities to identify and establish evidence of abuse of certain psychotropic and the health and social consequences of prolonged use. In this respect, he suggested that expertise and experience be drawn from within the country as well as on an intra-regional basis.
Dr. M. Parameshawara Deva: He reiterated the seriousness of the dadah problem. While the country has made great strides in economic, material and technical growth, all these achievements are marred by the menace of drug abuse.

He quoted statistics that show that today's addicts are among the youth of all ethnic groups, the Malays being among the greatest number. With 64% of the population being under 25, the problem has assumed alarming proportions.

He said that today, we face the dadah problem in every aspect of our lives. Crime rates have gone up, schools and industries have begun to deal with dadah-related problems. The existing welfare and other services have been found to be incapable of dealing with it. It would be naive to think that there is a NOE SHOT solution to the problem.

He said that perhaps too much has been said about the problem. The decade of the eighties must therefore be time for action, in terms of intensified law enforcement, treatment and rehabilitation, and individual action. Each of us in our own capacities must play a role in combating the menace. Media practitioners have a vital role in getting the message across effectively.

Mr. David Tambyah: Stressed on the pervasiveness of the dadah problem— that at the rate addition is progressing there will be one million addicts in 10 years' time. Greater effort must be made in the campaign against addiction.

The Campaign Suggested:

a) should be optimistic.

b) should help campaigners to contain or wipe problem.

c) every police, RT, welfare officer, student counsellor—should be mobilised in the campaign— a multiprong attach.

d) preventive education— on a long term carefully thought basis should be planned.

The Message:

1) That we accept the fact that we have a problem.

2) That something must be done.

3) That everyone has to do his bit to wipe problem.
PLENARY REPORT ON ENVIRONMENTALISM ISSUE

PAPER PRESENTED BY : EN. S.T. SUNDRAM
DIRECTOR, MINISTRY OF SCIENCE,
TECHNOLOGY AND ENVIRONMENT.

CHAIRPERSON : MR. PAUL MARKANDAN,
MANAGING DIRECTOR,
MPRC (ASIA) SDN. BHD.

PANELISTS :

1. MR. GURMIT SINGH,
PRESIDENT,
ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION SOCIETY.

2. EN. NORDIN ABDUL RAZAK,
DIRECTOR COORDINATION AND DEVELOPMENT,
UNITY CITY HALL.

3. MR. S.H. TAN,
EDITOR,
NATIONAL ECHO.

4. EN. ABDUL RAZAK ABDUL MAJID,
DIRECTOR GENERAL,
MALAYSIAN TIMBER INDUSTRY BOARD.

5. DR. T. CHELLIAH
FACULTY OF EDUCATION UNIVERSITY OF
MALAYA.
Mr. Mahasweran presented the key paper on behalf of Mr. S.T. Sundram, the author of the paper. It covered the following:

1. Major environmental problem in Malaysia due to lack of development and infra-structure facilities.
2. Rapid development has brought secondary problems i.e. damage and destruction to environment.
3. The most serious problem is water pollution.
4. Air pollution exists in major/urban industrial areas.
5. Solid refuse disposal is becoming a serious problem.
6. The government is aware of this problem and has initiated a policy and provided environmental management and control through legislation and administrative measures.
7. Role of mass media - the basic causes of environmental problems are complex and deeply embedded. Therefore the mass media can play a key role in creating awareness through
   (a) greater publicity
   (b) change in thinking
   (c) through environmental education.

Mr. Gurmit Singh

Everything seems fine on paper. There is gap between what is happening at the ground level and what's on paper.

Problems:

1. Inadequate Enforcement

There is no need for new legislation. What is important is adequate enforcement implementation.

If the Environment quality Act is adequately Enforced, then there is no problem.
(2) **Bureaucracy**

City Hall keeps thinking of big green lungs rather than small green lungs within walking distance.

When will the Klang river be clean?

(3) Also, the attitude of the media — blocking out press releases by environmentalists and criticising the Association.

(4) No policy on regeneration. Foreign resource based industries brought in interest a thought to regenerate.

**Solutions**

(1) We must ingrain civic consciousness in every person's life styles. Must not be compactmentalised. Must not create new specialists.

(2) **Feedback**

All three channels for feedback?

(a) Is there any investigative journalism on palm oil pollution?

(b) our bureaucracy does not create feedback.

Get feedback from poor people, not such people whether air or water.

**Challenge and Communications**

Do a good job both ways.

**Dr. T. Chelliah**

(1) Environmental problems affect everyone, there is a need for long term behavioral change.

(2) Legislative and administrative measures can result in immediate change but environmental education plays a key role in bringing about long term change.

(3) Environmental education — should be the concern not only of educators but also media people through the exercise of formal and informal functions.
(4) Among the weaknesses of our present educational system are:

(a) it is not wholistic.

(b) it demands a lot of expertise from teachers,

(c) curriculum too wide and repetitive.

Therefore the content of education must be revised and a wholistic view must be integrated into the educational system, particularly environmentalism should have a special emphasis in the education system.
PLENARY REPORT ON CONSUMERISM

CHAIRPERSON: MR. T.S. GILL,
PRESIDENT,
FOMCA

PAPER PRESENTED BY: MR. KHOR KOK PENG
RESEARCH DIRECTOR
CONSUMERS ASSOCIATION OF PENANG.

RESOURCE PERSONS:
1. MR. TEH BOON HWA
DIRECTOR
CONSUMER PROTECTION ADVISORY
COUNCIL UNIT
MINISTRY OF TRADE & INDUSTRY

2. MR. ROBERT PEREIRA,
HEAD,
INDUSTRIAL LIAISON,
SIRIM.

3. DR. ROKIAH TALIB,
VICE-PRESIDENT,
SELANGOR CONSUMERS ASSOCIATION.

4. MR. P.C. SHIVADAS
EDITORIAL MANAGER
NEW STRAITS TIMES PRESS.
In the workshop on Consumerism, the overview paper was presented by Mr. Khor Kok Peng of the Consumers Association Penang on the subject: Consumerism - Some Major Issues In The 80's." In his opening remarks, Mr. Khor touched on the current world inflationary situation which had resulted as a result of the energy crisis brought about by the unprecedented price increases in the fuel oil since 1973.

He then went on to say that whilst the main role of the consumer movement has been to act as the public watch dog to safeguard the consumer's interest, it was nevertheless important for the consumer movement to keep track of the changing needs of the consumer in the light of the latest development around us. While on the one hand the consumer movement should consolidate its position based upon past experiences, it should also focus its attention on the critical issues on energy environment and economics. Mr. Khor then went on to identify some of the major issues which concern the consumers in the 1980's. He broadly classified the issues as follows:

1. Exploitation in the market place
2. The crisis in environment, resources and life styles.

In the realm of exploitation, Mr. Khor stated that the consumers were still being exploited inspite of numerous legislation to protect the consumers. He said that whilst prices were moving up the quality of goods was going down. There has been a widespread increase in the price of essential commodities. He also touched on the acute shortages of essential goods and services like water and electricity a situation which could be described as "Shortage Economy". He also suggested that the price control act was being violated by unscrupulous business men without it being properly enforced. Shortwaiting and adulteration of food stuffs and beverages was widespread. Other problems outlined include

(a) misleading advertisements in the press
(b) mal-practises in the housing industry and,
(c) the increasing sales of dangerous food stuffs, drugs and other products which threaten the safety and health of our consumers. Mr. Khor cited examples of surveys and tests undertaken by the Consumers Association of Penang.

He suggested that the present legislation be enforced more effectively. On the problems of environment, resources and life styles, Mr. Khor said that the environmental problem was not an abstract or statistical concept. In fact it was already effecting the livelihood and lives of millions of Malaysians at grass-root levels. Whilst the basic needs
of the poor majority were not fully satisfied, attention was being diverted to the luxury needs of the minority.

In conclusion Mr. Khor emphasised that consumerism had a vital role to play in fighting market exploitation and making ordinary people and policy makers aware of the need for consumer protection. He recommended the following:

(a) that government consider the enforcing of consumer laws more effectively
(b) where necessary introduce new consumer laws,
(c) a special study be undertaken to maintain an inventory of our resources;
(d) a policy to survey our resources should be evolved based upon the above study, and
(e) that the press should give greater coverage to consumer issues.

During the panel discussion, Mr. Teh of the Consumers Affairs Department, Ministry of Trade and Industry touched on the labelling order which was to be effective from 1st January 1981. He said that more control could upset the general economy and was of the opinion that the existing consumer laws were adequate. However, greater co-ordination was necessary in the implementation of the existing legislation. He was also of the view that price control should only be applicable to essential commodities and that consumers should play an important role and not rely too much on government control. He also recommended that the consumer movement should evolve programmes for consumer education.

Mr. Pereira of SIRIM concurred with Mr. Teh that the existing legislation was adequate but efforts should be made to improve on the enforcement of this legislation. He also suggested that there should be greater consumer consciousness on the part of the public. Mr. Pereira also said that poor quality should not be confused as a mal-practice.

The last panelist, Mr. Shivadas of the New Straits Time remarked that consumerism in Malaysia was still to make an impact inspite of the assistance given by the government to the consumers association. He said that consumer movement should be made more effective and said that if we are not making enough progress in consumer protection, perhaps we should change our approach.

He was of the opinion that at the moment the consumer movement was attempting to apply curative measures to tackle the problems and suggested that perhaps we should at the same time apply preventive measures.
He also suggested that we should work towards changing the attitudes of the consumers and in this respect, it would perhaps be ideal to start with the school children.

He also said that the press had an important role in informing the consumers of its rights but indicated that there were limitations due to legal constraints. However, the press could highlight consumer issues and problems particularly in areas of specific complaints.

He also invited the consumers to make full use of newspaper columns to air their grievances. There were various questions from the floor on various aspects of consumerism.
PLENARY REPORT ON

RURAL-URBAN MIGRATION

CHAIRPERSON : Mr. R. Balakrishnan,
Director,
Asia-Pacific Institute for Broadcasting
Development (AIBD)

PAPER PRESENTED BY: YM Tunku Shamsul Bahrin,
Head of Geography Department,
University of Malaya.

RESOURCE PERSONS : Puan Fawziah Elyas,
Head, Counselling Unit,
Institut Teknologi MARA.

Dr. Lim Lin Lian,
Lecturer, Faculty of Economics,
University of Malaya.

En. Md. Shamsuddin Z. Suffian,
Lecturer, Dept. of Sociology
& Anthropology,
Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia.

Dr. David Muttu,
Chairman,
The Befrienders.
The salient points that emerged from the paper presentation and also the panel discussion were:

1) that rural to rural migration was more dominant than rural to urban migration;
2) that rural-urban migration was seen more in the context of squatter problems rather than studied in greater detail. Consequently there were uncertain diagnosis and misguided perceptional prescriptions about the ills of this phenomenon;
3) that there was clear evidence of an absence of government or public policy to deal with migration issues;
4) that there generally was a failure to understand or make a distinction between urban growth and urbanisation which were unintelligently related to the question of migration, whether rural-urban, rural-rural or urban-urban;
5) that viable alternatives for migrations were to be found in well-planned and designed rural development schemes;
6) that while migration played an equilibrating role and contributed in some measure to industrial growth, growth of cities, growth of urban centres etc., there was little understanding about the pressures that such migrations imposed on resources, partly due to inadequate studies of the phenomena;
7) that rural-urban migration was partly the result of the existing educational system and educational facilities;
8) that rural-urban migration was both beset by, and created, problems in the contexts of culture shock, the "lonely crowd", amenities and facilities;
9) that the phenomenon should be accepted as natural and efforts should be made to house, educate, train and generally make the persons so involved feel that they were wanted and useful in society;
10) that the media, while being partly responsible to the trend of people from rural areas to urban areas, could play a more positive role by dealing with models of rural successes rather than urban successes;
11) that the media should be better equipped to have an educated view of the complex range of problems associated with rural-urban migration if they are to play a useful role;
12) that media had failed in their responsibility to highlight the issues relating to rural-urban migration; and
13) that more systematic research efforts were needed to understand the phenomenon of migration and arrive at suitable measures to cope with it.

Questions from the floor, especially those that were related to the political impact of migration were dealt with lamely, although the point about the political relevance of migration was generally granted.
PLENARY REPORT

on

MULTI-NATIONAL CORPORATIONS

CHAIRPERSON : MR. FELIX ABISHEGANADEN
CORPORATIVE DIRECTOR,
ERIC WHITE ASSOCIATES SDN. BHD.

PAPER PRESENTED BY : EN. DIN MERICAN
GROUP FINANCIAL MANAGER,
SIME DARBY BERHAD

RESOURCE PERSONS : 1. EN. RAHMAN ALI
PERSONNEL & TRAINING ADVISOR, INCHCAPE

2. MR. DONALD J. LEQNE
MANAGING DIRECTOR,
COLGATE-PALMOLIVE (MALAYSIA) SDN. BHD

3. EN. JAAFAR INDOT,
TRADE RELATIONS DIRECTOR,
SHELL MALAYSIA.

4. DR. MUNIR MAJID
ASSISTANT EDITOR,
NEW STRAITS TIMES.
MULTI-NATIONAL CORPORATIONS ISSUE

Encik Din Merican defined a multi-national company as an organisation operating business in several countries around the world; though like any ordinary person it had to have a home; or a base somewhere. Unlike other MNCs with headquarters overseas, SIME operated from Malaysia.

He associated the growth of Sime Darby with the dynamic growth of the Malaysia economy in the decade of the 70s and Sime's own ability to operate in different socio-economic and political environments.

Encik Din Merican stressed that in whatever country it established its operations Sime was careful that it behaved, as it would expect a similar foreign company to behave in Malaysia -- like any 'good corporate citizen. He believed that MNCs operating in Malaysia had shown an awareness of the need, and the willingness to make a commitment of expatriate management time, and other resources to train local management personnel.

Encik Jaafar Endot spoke of some of the issues of the '80s in so far as the oil industry was concerned. One of these was the important role that oil multinationals would play in recycling funds in the necessary investments in future energy projects.

He said the full exploitation of the world's natural resources was possible only if the free exchange of funds for investments was allowed.

Encik Jaafar believed that today, more than ever, technical expertise and financial resources of major oil companies were vital factors in the fight for a secured energy future.

He felt multinationals would have to be more articulate in communicating effectively with the society in which they operated. Also that they would have to continue performing their operations in a responsible and socially acceptable manner.

Mr. Don Leone's remarks were centred on "Corporate Citizenship". A multi-national's usefulness to the host country could, he said, be measured by:

1. Its response to specific needs of a community
2. How well it supported the stated goals of host governments and its aspirations.
3. Its contribution to improving standards of living or quality of life.
Mr. Leone spoke of Colgate's contribution to community development world-wide and showed a film illustrating this.

Encik Rahman Ali said he had to support the policies of MNCs "all the way" because, as was evident, these companies in Malaysia had contributed towards boosting the national economy and raising living standards. He quoted figures to show how Inco was training Bumiputra executive and explained its recruitment programme which included ITM graduates.

Dr. Munir Majid referred to the length of time that MNCs had operated in Malaysia and other countries and regretted that only recently these companies had taken steps to discharge their corporate responsibilities towards the host country. He felt that the "love-hate relationship" between host countries and multi-nations would continue, particularly because some MNCs were so huge that they couldn't be touched. Dr. Munir then discussed the behaviour of oil companies and said he had noted a certain reticence on their part to divulge information.

All said and done, Dr. Munir said, one of the main reasons for the presence of multi-nationals was the profit motive.

There were five questions from the floor. These covered:

1. The behavior of MNCs which could have contributed towards lowering standards in the host country.

2. The determination of MNCs to meet the aspirations of individual host countries.

3. The percentage (of profits) devoted to social services of host countries

4. Training and transfer of technology

5. Whether PR and advertising agencies were used to propagate foreign cultures

The panelists answered these questions to the satisfaction of the session and the session ended at 5:25 p.m.